



Weddings at Westminster Presbyterian Church

The information in this document is to answer some of the many questions that arise concerning wedding arrangements, the rehearsal, costs, etc. This information outlines what is acceptable for your wedding and rehearsal.

A wedding at Westminster is first and foremost a Christian worship service. It is a time to celebrate with God, our families, and our friends what God is doing in our lives through Christ Jesus. Therefore, all aspects of the wedding and rehearsal should reflect that purpose.

We at Westminster feel privileged to share with many couples in the joyful experience of marriage. We want to help make your wedding a meaningful and happy experience for you, your families, and your guests. We believe the best way to accomplish that is to be certain that our understanding of a wedding is compatible with your own. We want to be sure of this at the outset, so we ask you to read and understand the information contained in this contract in its entirety before you commit to a Westminster wedding.

The Wedding

To love another and to want to live with and support that person for the rest of your life is one of the most exciting and life-changing experiences that a person could have. The Christian faith speaks to this experience in a most profound and meaningful way. If you are contemplating marriage, it is at least as important to find out what Christians have to say about a wedding as what "Modern Bride" or Emily Post has to say.

The Presbyterian Church requires that its pastors make a solemn judgment on each wedding they perform. They are required to instruct and discuss the privileges and obligations the bride and groom will assume in a Christian marriage. It is also right that the minister, who will be worshipping with them on their wedding day, be convinced of the couple's commitment to Jesus Christ. Each couple must complete a minimum of three counseling sessions before their wedding. The counseling can be on your own, or you can meet with the pastor who is officiating your wedding.

We are a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and, not only are we legally bound to abide by our denomination's requirements, we sincerely believe in our Church's view of Christian marriage. Our pastors are bound by their ordination vows to abide by these requirements as well. In addition, our own governing board has enacted various policies, all intended to insure that all weddings at Westminster are truly services of worship that reflect our commitment to the sanctity of marriage.

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Location

We have two locations at Westminster that we traditionally use for weddings; the sanctuary and the chapel.

Large weddings are held in Westminster's sanctuary. The sanctuary seats up to 865 people if both the downstairs and all balconies upstairs are used. Downstairs there are 15 rows of pews. The length of the center aisle is 56 feet. For music, the sanctuary contains an organ and a grand piano. A sound system with a microphone is available for scripture readings. There is also a sound board through which pre-recorded music can be played.

Smaller weddings can be held in our Chapel. The Chapel seats 75 comfortably and contains both an organ and piano. There are 9 rows of pews, and the center aisle is 33 feet long.

The size of the wedding does not automatically determine the location of the wedding ceremony. Brides with small weddings may choose to reserve either location.

The Wedding Date

Your wedding is not considered officially booked until the following conditions are met. 1) A \$500 deposit is paid to the church. Half of the wedding deposit is refundable if the wedding is cancelled more than 6 months before the wedding date and no time has been spent by either the pastor or wedding coordinator. 2) The wedding contract is signed and turned into the church office. You will have five days after paying your deposit to sign your contract. During that time, if you have any questions regarding the contract, please contact the wedding coordinator. If, in that period of 5 days, you decide not to book the church, your check for the deposit will be returned to you. 3) The application form (pink) is completed and turned into the office.

*The wedding date will, of course, depend on when the minister is available, and when the church sanctuary or chapel is available.

Guest Officiants

If you would like to have another Presbyterian minister or clergy of another recognized faith participate in your worship service as a co-officiant, please discuss this with the pastor at your initial appointment. It is appropriate that the Minister at Westminster initiate and extend an invitation to the guest officiant or co-officiate. The Pastor from Westminster must co-officiate the wedding.

Music

A member of our music staff will provide the organ or piano accompaniment for your service. A CD of typical wedding music played by our organist is available on loan for your consideration. You may choose music not on the CD but sheet music must be provided to the organist at least three weeks before the wedding.

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date. If using the organist and standard music from the CD provided by Westminster, your final music selections must be given to your Wedding Coordinator two weeks before the wedding. In selecting music, it is not our desire to be unduly restrictive, but to ensure musical choices are appropriate to a service of worship.

Our music staff is available for rehearsals with your soloists prior to the service on your wedding day. The musicians do not come to the rehearsal. If you require extra rehearsals or would like them to come to the rehearsal, please contact them directly to make those arrangements. There will be an additional fee for this service.

If you wish to use a vocal or instrumental soloist or group, the Organist and your Wedding Coordinator will work with you to ensure high standards of musical quality are upheld and appropriate music is selected. **In addition, a sound technician will be required at an additional minimal fee.** A sound technician will also be required if you choose to use pre-recorded music. Any pre-recorded music must be in MP3 format, either on an IPOD or similar device. It must be available at the rehearsal in order to be used at the wedding.

Wedding Coordinator

Every wedding at Westminster will use the services of the Church's Wedding Coordinator who will serve as your primary contact. Our Wedding Coordinator will offer expert advice and assistance at your wedding. She is a wonderful help on not only the wedding day, but also at the rehearsal and the making of all wedding plans regarding decorations, lighting, etc. She will have access to all the facilities as needed for your wedding. Your wedding coordinator will contact you approximately 6-8 weeks before your wedding, if not sooner. However, if you have questions before that time, you may call the office and request a call sooner. You will meet with the wedding coordinator BEFORE the rehearsal date to make sure you are both clear on the expectations of the wedding day. That meeting will last approximately one hour and will be set up at a time that is convenient for you both.

The Worship Service

The pastor will provide you a copy of wedding worship service options for the you to consider as a couple, from the opening to the closing of the service, including prayers and scriptural references commonly read. We ask that your service selections, including any alternatives you may have discussed with the pastor, be submitted to the church office no later than two weeks before the rehearsal date. If you are using a guest pastor, you must provide a written order of service to your wedding coordinator and the church office at least two weeks before the date of the rehearsal.

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Church and Chapel

Decorations

Decorations should enhance the spirit of worship and celebration. Candles and flowers used with restraint are in good taste and will provide an attractive background.

As a part of your reservation fee, the Church can provide a kneeling bench, unity candle holder, guest book lecterns and a variety of candelabras. Let your wedding coordinator know if you would like us to provide any of the four candelabras or 12 aisleabras the Church has available.

Since the ongoing programs of Westminster take precedence over all other events, any banner(s), flowers, or other decorations in the sanctuary, chapel, or meeting rooms will not be removed for a wedding ceremony.

Also, flowers or other objects, except what is appropriate for a service of worship, are not to be placed on the communion table.

The wedding coordinator and pastor have ultimate discretion in allowing any and all decorations in the sanctuary and chapel.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is generally held in the early evening. It is important that all parties concerned with the wedding be present on time. To meet your needs, Westminster will set aside an hour for your rehearsal. Please be prompt so that you may take advantage of the full 60 minutes. Please give the wedding license to the pastor officiating before the rehearsal begins. (Please call the Sacramento County Clerk for recorded information about obtaining a Marriage License or for specific details of the legal requirements. There is no waiting period, and blood tests are not required. Licenses are good for 90 days. Minimum age is 18; those under 18 must have parental or court permission to marry.) Please ask your entire wedding party to park in the lot at the rear of the Church and enter by the rear door of the church. If your rehearsal goes more than 90 minutes there will be an additional fee of \$100.

Access on Your Wedding Day

The Church is available for **four hours total** on the day of your wedding. This must include set up time for your vendors, such as florists or decorators. The actual time of arrival must be set with the Wedding Coordinator. Additional time may be available depending on the other events happening at Westminster the date of your wedding. If additional time is available, an additional fee of \$100 per hour is required.

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Thrown Items

For safety reasons, we ask that rice, bird seed or confetti not be thrown on the church property or on city sidewalks. However, flower petals both real and silk are allowed in the sanctuary or chapel.

Photographs and Video

Flash pictures **may not** be taken during the worship service. The worship service officially begins at the lighting of the candles. It is helpful to have that statement printed in the program if you are providing one for your guests. Time can be arranged for formal poses before or after the worship service. We recommend that you coordinate picture taking with reception plans so that guests will not be kept waiting a prolonged period of time. Professional photographers will work with the wedding coordinator and be informed of the requirements again on the day of the wedding, but it is important that you let them know before the wedding as well. Due to the fact that the wedding is a sacred event, movement of the photographers during the ceremony will be limited.

Video taping is permitted from either of the side balconies, provided that the technicians remain still during the service, or from an unattended camera located unobtrusively in the chancel area. Please remember that the chancel furniture is part of the symbolism of the sanctuary. Pulpits and lecterns are not to be used as camera stands, etc! Please make sure your video operators and guests are aware of this policy. The pastor and wedding coordinator will ultimately decide if requested placement is available.

Liability

Any damage done to church property, furniture or furnishings by the wedding party, guests, florists, photographers or person assisting shall be repaired at your expense since the person or firm responsible for the damage has contracted with you. Also, the wedding couple is responsible for making sure that they remove all items brought to the church with them. Items left at Westminster and their possible loss are not the responsibility of the church. We expect that excess trash will be removed by the wedding party as well or additional fees may apply. Repairs must be completed to the satisfaction of the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee of the Administration Department of Westminster's governing board.

Understanding that all efforts will be made to make your wedding day exceed your expectations, sometimes things happen outside of our control. If the wedding is completed, and the time required is given to the bridal party, **no refunds of any kind will be given after the day of the wedding.**

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What We Expect of You

- ◆ That you will take full advantage of this opportunity to prepare yourselves for the major step of marriage and will work in partnership with us to plan the worship service. INITIAL _____

- ◆ That you will work cooperatively with staff in scheduling and keeping appointments, meeting payments and other schedules. We expect all wedding participants, including the bride and groom, to arrive on time for the rehearsal and the wedding. There is often more than one rehearsal or wedding scheduled on the same day, so it is important to honor the time schedule. INITIAL _____

- ◆ That you will do your part to see that members of the wedding party abide by church policies, including no alcoholic beverages on the premises, no smoking in the buildings, no one being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the rehearsal or the ceremony. INITIAL _____

- ◆ That you understand that you are the contracted party for the wedding, and are ultimately responsible for the behavior of your vendors and guests. If any other party causes your wedding to go beyond the contracted 4 hours you will be required to pay the additional hour fees. INITIAL _____

What You Can Expect of Us

- ◆ Your wedding coordinator will contact you, usually 4-6 weeks before your wedding date to plan your rehearsal and wedding day schedule. INITIAL _____

- ◆ That we will do whatever we can do to make your wedding day a wonderful experience for you. INITIAL _____

- ◆ That we will arrive on time to all appointments and conduct ourselves professionally at all times. INITIAL _____

- ◆ That we will communicate with you in a timely manner, responding to emails and phone calls as quickly as possible. INITIAL _____

- ◆ That the church will be available for your entire four hours of time on your wedding day, and will be set up correctly as per your requests, or we will make sure adjustments are made. INITIAL _____

In Closing

The wedding staff of Westminster looks forward to the privilege of assisting you in making your wedding the worshipful and memorable event that you hope for.

If you do not have a church home, we gladly invite you to attend our services, especially on the Sunday before your wedding. We would like to recognize you and include you in our morning prayers. Please notify the coordinator which of our two services you plan to attend; either 8:45 or 11 a.m.